

Student Handout:

Kelp: Is it ...



or



There are two expressions that can apply to kelp:

If it walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it must be a duck.

Looks can be deceiving.

At first glance, you could look at a piece of kelp washed on the shore and conclude that kelp is a plant. After all, it looks like a plant and functions like a plant. Both plants and kelp have, or seem to have, a root system, a stem or trunk, and leaves. Some plants can form groups called forests, and kelp can be organized into forests. Therefore, it would seem that plants and kelp are biological cousins! Actually, kelp is classified as a protist.

Directions:

1. In this activity, use the Websites your teacher gave you to help you determine the similarities and differences between “plants” and kelp.

Question	Plant	Kelp
In what type of habitat (terrestrial, aquatic, or marine) am I found?		
Am I multicellular?		
Am I eukaryotic?		
What is my energy source?		
Do I have chlorophyll?		

How do I convert my energy source to sugar?		
Am I motile?		
Do I have roots or a holdfast?		
Do I grow upwards or do I float upwards?		
Do I have a stem or stipe?		
Do I have blades or leaves?		
Do I grow in groups called a forest?		
Do I have a thallus or vascular tissues?		

2. Use the information found on the table to complete the Venn diagram below to help you compare plants and kelp. What are the similarities and what are the differences between the two? How is each adapted to its environment?

